THE CHAP-BOOK

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WAGNER

FAINT far born was blown-I listened-and the bollow north Grew thunderous and sweet with sound! From vaulted caves of ice, where the lone sea boomed, Wild echoes of voices sprang. From the bitter North swart maidens swept Horsed like warriors; their stallions' feet Trampling the slant sleet of the keen wind, Ravens flapped by, black as the winged belmets The sisters wore, followed with lustful cries; But the eyes of the passionless maidens Were sweet and clear and wild.

Deep in the rocks grim toilers trod, Vast forms steel-clad and masterful Smote bellowing dragons in their dens. Lightning circled the desolated peaks Where the gods sorrowed.

Voices, everywhere voices? Snarls of vengeance, shouts of defiance, Wails of anguish over the slain, Where women white-bodied and splendid Veiled with shining bair, lay faint On dead lovers' breasts,

While deep

In the flood arose the water-women's song. Copyright 1895 by STONE & KIMBALL Symphonies infinite, sad, wide as despair,
Deep as regret, arose from the earth and water
And blew in strenuous streams of harmony.
Unavailing heauty, strength and youth,
Valkyrie, Dwarfs, Demi-gods, Wotan, Loki,
Imperial Brunhilde and her Sieg fried
All waking, moved and sang and fought again
In the golden, rose-shot mist of music-land,
And wondering, in horror strange as sweet, I cried
"O dreams of darkness, who hath conjured you?"
And in the dim light they turned
And lifted their hands, while the sea snarled on,
And in a sound which whelmed me like a sea,
They cried "Our master, WAGNER!"

HAMLIN GARLAND.

IS THE NEW WOMAN NEW?

(Varium et mutabile semper femina)

T is impossible to resist the New Woman, mainly, perhaps, on account of her moral fascination; but somewhat is due in this behalf to a certain perspective which, reaching into the enchantment of remote times, connects her with a picturesque succession of New Women.

The question might be raised to decide, even at this late hour, between Eve and Lilith; which of them was the progressive, representative female?

There have been notable personages, all along the line of the centuries, who have added grace or disgrace to their sex by vigorous assertion of new-womanhood. From the Hebrew woman who drove the nail into her enemy's head, along down by way of the Greek philosopher's wife, to Queen Elizabeth, as thoroughly authentic records seem to establish, an unbroken strain of man-harrying amazons march through history. And side by side with it another procession is composed of the intellectual prodigies of various female types who have assaulted the masculine stronghold of science and art, from the days of Sappho to this good hour.

Charles Baudelaire, in one of his Fleurs du Mal, longs for the day of giantesses, and tuning his harp to the major key of desire, sings with superb gallantry to the beat of an enormous plectrum;

"Du temps que la Nature en sa verve puissante Concevait chaque jour des enfants monstreux J'eusse aimé vivre auprès d'une jeune géante, Comme aux pieds d'une reine un chat voluptueux."

Of course a poet is sure to use strong language which goes better with some grains of salt; but there is no doubt touching the following sketch of a New Woman:

" J'eusse aimé

Ramper sur le versant des ses genoux énormes, Et parfois en été, quand les soleils malsains, Lasse, la font s'étendre à travers la campagne, Dormir nonchalamment à l'ombre de ses seins,

Comme un hameau paisible au pied d'une montagne."

To be a very large woman's little cat might not satisfy the highest aspiration of a manly man, even among fin de siècle poets; and to be as a mere village in her bosom's mountain shadow is not open to consideration in the most degenerate masculine mind of our epoch. Still Baudelaire's verses, being neither humor nor satire, adumbrate a possible out. come of civilization, were the New Woman to take a giantesque turn. She might be supremely pleased with having man purring at her toes, or hopelessly asleep in her shadow.

Some uneasiness on the subject undoubtedly exists in certain male imaginations. Not long ago I said to a friend of mine that I was willing for women to vote on equal terms with men; that I considered their enfranchisement a matter for them to settle; if they in committee of the whole should declare for this thing, let them have it as a matter of course. My friend bridled. "Yes, let them have it," he cried; "let them run the government woman-fashion for a while. There's no danger in the experiment. When we get tired of them we can take empty guns and scare them quite out

of the country. Indeed it would be fun."

To avoid a hot political discussion I fell into his humor and suggested that the New Woman was waxing athletic; that her muscles were changing; she was even beginning to throw a stone by the true arm-wheel motion, as boys and men do. And I drew his attention to the young ladies on bicycles gliding past. Then there were the fencing schools, too, and the woman's shooting galleries, where girls were taught military doings. What did he imagine might come of permitting this progress toward physical equality? Mayhap, on some dire day, a second Jeanne d'Arc would call to the New Woman, as did the other to chivalric man, and lead the way to wonders of conquest, instead of being scared by empty guns.

"Jeanne d'Arc was, indeed, a typical New Woman," he snarled; "she led on to Rouen." He pronounced it ruin. "And you will please remember her successor at Lyons." This was his Parthian arrow; he shot it back over his shoulder, in hasty retreat meantime, and it stuck and rankled in my critical curiosity. I cudgelled memory to recollect who could be this lyonnaise so tantalizingly enmisted in allusion; one is not to be censured for being taken aback; Lyons is a small city, little but old, and a long ways off;

moreover mine adversary had left me no date.

You can trust a provincial however, when it comes to a matter of provincial history. A short day's rummaging served my turn. Louise Labé presented herself to me in a new light, a striking figure seen through three and a third centuries of feminine aspiration, struggle and change. As in the case of Sappho, the woman was beset by coarse defamers, men who made a sort of middle comedies at her expense, and doubtless she behaved measurably in accordance with the social influences of her time and place; but she was a New Woman, notably independent, original and strong.

During the course of a fascinating study in which I reviewed everything at hand having relation to the life of this remarkable and much maligned woman, the world-old attitude of the Literary Libertine was projected afresh. The man who, in the name of gallantry, writes shame on the record of beauty, genius and strength, merely because they chance to be the possession of a woman, stood before me in

full stature.

Louise Labé, known as La Belle Cordière, was born at Lyons in the year 1526. Her real name, before her marriage with Ennemond Perrin, was probably Charlin; but she wrote over the signature of Louise Labé, and her poetry immortalized it. I do not feel like recommending any of her writings. They are historically and artistically interesting; but one finds them out-paganing the pagans in some most objectionable essentials. What attracts me in her behalf is a certain rudimentary foresay uttered by her, not so much in her literature as through her life, a foresay comprehending the modern feminine aspiration. Nor would I be understood to mean that I admire her attitude or her aim; many qualifications would be necessary; but she is attractive because she is a significant figure.

Her father was a cordier, or a ship-supply merchant, or

both; at all events he was rich and gave his daughter a most liberal education. Lyons at that time was a literary center, one of those spots in the south of France made intellectually fertile by the residuary influence of Italian and Spanish residents of earlier days. Like Avignon, it was a singing station on the bank of the melodious Rhone, contributing its odes and ballades and chansons to the medley which went gayly on down through the hills to the Mediterranean at Les Bouches.

When Louise was sixteen, that is to say in the year 1542, Francis I. laid siege to Perpignan, which precisely a hundred years later became permanently a city of France. The siege was a dismal failure; but some daring deeds were done in its behalf. For hard fighting and distinguished personal valor honored those dying days of old chivalry. A striking figure, a youthful Captain Loys, all armoured and lance-bearing, came into view at Perpignan.

This was Louise Labé, in her rôle of New Woman, an apparition sure to storm the hearts of men if not the salients of Perpignan. As she herself sings it, she was seen—

"En armes fière aller,
Porter la lance et bois faire aller,
Le devoir faire en l'estour furieux,
Piquer, volter le cheval glorieux."

Cervantes might sneer in vain at this rich new bloom of knighthood. What would Sidney or Bayard have counted for at sixteen beside her in the burning imagination of the Midi? One of our American poets, a woman who sings of divine right, truly says

"There is no sex in courage and in pain."

Louise Labé had courage of the first order. Helmet and breastplate, steel boot and clinking spur decorated an embodied defiance when she rode down to the beleagured stronghold. Captain Loys represented a revolt of girlhood against the sugar-coated sex-slavery of the times.

My cynical friend had some good ground for citing La Belle Cordière as an example of disaster. Her campaign came to nothing; she returned to Lyons, married a rich rope-man, and went into the business of writing grotic verse. But why do so many women, and over and over again, commit this blighting mistake in the course of their battle for liberty? Must the New Woman inevitably get herself entangled in the meshes of the illicit? I think not. Good mothers. faithful wives and healthy-minded sweethearts are not to be crowded out of the army of progress and reform; they are in to stay; but the Louise Labés are also a persistent element, and unfortunately the noisiest and apparently most influential, especially in the field of literature.

Woman must come to her own; she must have full freedom; would that to-morrow were the day of it; but not if she is to be like the wife in the "Heavenly Twins," not if she must take pattern by a "Yellow Aster" heroine, a "Key-Notes" woman, a "Daughter of Music" or any of the still worse models set up by the latest female propagandists of social and domestic reform. These writers of polemical fiction favoring the new order of social license are at present more in evidence than the rest of them. Man, brutal Man, would be quite justified in appealing to his superior muscle to prevent the arrival of this New Woman, or to hale her to prison, as an enemy of the race, should she prove clever enough to break through the masculine guard. One laughs, nevertheless, thinking how justly and effectively these decadent women might retort by wondering what manner of government and civilization we should have were the Tolstois, the Hardys, the Maupassants, the George Moores, the Zolas, the Ibsens and the Hall Caines given the lawmaking and law-executing powers! A beautiful suggestion.

I can think of no political absurdity so deep, no domestic calamity so comprehensively terrible. Perhaps our buff American senator was inspired when he objected to "them literary fellers" being recognized as political possibilities, and I can fully realize the untainted unction with which the English judge sent a certain be-sunflowered sethete to hard prison labor upon a recent occasion. The general principle is that an unsexed woman and an emasculate man ought to be considered as outlaws.

When Captain Loys rode down to Perpignan on her glotious war-horse she doubtless sang many an amazonian battlesong foretasting from afar the triumph of the New Woman when she should mount to the bastion coping and fling out the banner of France. Some months later, riding homeward up the fertile valley of the Rhone, she changed her tune to a plaintive, backward-going wail for a lost lover who had proved untrue. Farewell to Roussillon, to dreams of military glory, to all the fierce throbs of war—and good bye to the stalwart, fickle soldier who broke her heart!

It is Captain Loys no longer: the lance lies back yonder somewhere under the curtain of Perpignan's fort; the helmet is too heavy; the steel boots have tired the dainty feet, and the embossed shield is gone from the girl's left arm. Pretty Louise Labé sits sidewise on a palfrey pacing gently up to Lyons; she is going home to marry, forlorn and loveless, an easy-going and rich cordier with a luxurious home and a garden by the Rhone. The New Woman has tried to be a man, and a man has, by the ancient test, shown her the folly of it.

To a lusty youth a thing of that sort is phillipped aside and forgotten; the girl lays it deep in her heart. He and she have met; he goes on his way whistling a troubadour catch, she loses faith in every soul under heaven; and likely enough the worst that passed between them was a tender word or two, possibly a kiss. You see God built us for different tasks; and the true New Woman knows it; she would like to be rid of the Labés. Yet somehow these Yellow Book Girls make all the noise, lead the van and get most of the attention.

"There is our weak point," said a noble woman to me; she is one of the fine, strong spirits in the work of lifting her sex to true freedom; "there is our chief obstacle. The divorced women, or 'grass widows,' the drunkard's wives, and the disappointed old maids, are assuming leadership, taking it by vulgar force. This sets the men against us and gives them that irresistible weapon, ridicule. The women we most need for leaders and followers are the happy wives and mothers. We want the women who have not lost faith in men, marriage and maternity, the three great Ms. Not that we have no sympathy with our unfortunate and unhappy sisters; but the woman with a grievance, a moan of woe in her throat and a score to settle with Fate, is not a votemaker. She irritates the men and they tell her that she should have had better luck. She seems to forget that it is from the men that our boom must come, and that they will never grant it while our dyspeptics are to the fore. Who, indeed, cares a straw for what an unsuccessful person screams to possess?"

Now, this good woman may have been too hard upon the class she was talking at, I dare say she was; but there was excellent political wisdom in her words. The Louise Labés are naturally somewhat jaundiced and hysterical; when the adventures of Captain Loys are over the next thing is a career against Fate and the limits of sex. But it is to those who already have plenty and to spare that fortune tumbles down her largest gifts, not to the empty handed and greedy eyed failures who have nothing but a song of dole to sing.

Louise Labé went the common road of the irresponsible New Woman in literature, the road so very popular to-day, which is paved with erotic poetry and the fiction of free love and marital infidelity, beginning her new life by posing as a victim bound in loveless marriage-chains on the altar of monstrous social injustice. Her poetry was super-Sapphic and addressed to the other man, not her husband, a man who presumably was above the trade of a cordier, and therefore

irresistible to the low-born poetess.

We must distinctly agree with Sainte-Beuve, who chivalrously acquits Louise Labé of actual personal dishonor. This thing of dressing up a literary effigy and labeling it with the lyrical egotism as self-expression is an old poetic ruse, a fiction of the Muses. Louise was good enough for her time and place. She imagined herself a sociologist, and somehow got it in mind that the only purpose of sociology is by hook or crook to get rid of the sanctity of the marriage relation. Indeed, if we may judge the New Woman, from Louise's time to now, by her poems and fictions, we must inevitably conclude that she would define sociology as the science of making the social evil appear harmlessly attractive; or that, like some of our contemporaries, she would travel all the way to Russia to get the pattern of Tolstoi's trousers, having in mind a stunning new bicycle suit, or a lecture upon dress She is not humorous; but she makes a good deal reform. of fun for the men.

After all it may be that the New Woman is a recurring decimal, as the arithmeticians would say, appearing at certain intervals with a constantly shifting value to civilization. If she persists in being rather ornamental than useful, taken as a noun of multitude, we are all the more her debtor on the side of romance, which

"Loves to nod and sing,"

and which, if it cannot always get "sweetness and light" to charm itself withal, gladly accepts sweetness and chic instead. Half way between a grotesque gargoyle and a dainty flower-



Drawing by Dawson Watson



ornament of our social and domestic structure, there is, perhaps, a mean at which the New Woman is aiming; at all events she means to be decorative, as she always has been, and down the ages ahead of us she will doubtless continue to charm, amuse and marry man, proving herself to him a great luxury, but notably expensive.

MAURICE THOMPSON.

IN A ROSE-GARDEN



HUNDRED years from now, dear beart, We will not care at all.

It will not matter then a whit,
The honey or the gall.
The summer days that we have known
Will all forgotten be and flown;
The garden will be overgrown
Where now the roses fall.

A bundred years from now, dear beart, We will not mind the pain.
The throbbing crimson tide of life Will not bave left a stain.
The song we sing together, dear, Will mean no more than means a tear Amid a summer rain.

A bundred years from now, dear beart, The grief will all be o'er; The sea of care will surge in vain Upon a careless shore. These glasses we turn down to-day Here at the parting of the way: We will be wineless then as they, And will not mind it more.

A bundred years from now, dear beart, We'll neither know nor care What came of all life's bitterness Or followed love's despair.
Then fill the glasses up again And kiss me through the rose-leaf rain; We'll build one castle more in Spain And dream one more dream there.

JOHN BENNETT.

SCENES IN THE VOSHTI HILLS VII.

THE TENT OF THE PURPLE MAT

HE Tent stands on the Mount of Lost Winters, in that bit of hospitable land called the Fair Valley, which is like no other in the North. Whence comes the soft wind that comforts it, who can tell? It swims through the great gap in the Mountains, and passing down the Valley, sinks upon the prairie of the Ten Stars, where it is lost. And what man first placed the Tent on the Mount, none knows, though legends are many. It has a clear outlook to the North whence comes the gracious wind, and it is sheltered at the South by a stout wall of commendable trees; yet these are at some small distance, so that the Tent

has a space all about it, and the figure of the general land is as that of an amphitheatre.

It is made of deerskin, dyed by a strange process, which turned it white, and, doctored by some cunning medicine it is like a perfect parchment, and shows no decay. It has a centre-pole of excellent fir, and from its peak flies a strip of snake-skin, dyed a red that naver fades. For the greater part of the year the plateau whereon the Tent stands is covered with a sweet grass, and when the grass dies there comes a fine white frost, ungoverned by the sun, in which the footstep sinks, as into unfilled honeycomb.

The land has few clouds, and no storms, save of the lightest—rain which is as mist, and snow which is as frosty haze. The sun cherishes the place continually, and the moon rises on it with a large rejoicing.

Yet no man dwells in the Valley. It is many scores of leagues from any habitation, from the lodges of the Indians or the posts of the Company's people. There are few tribes that know of it, and these go not to it as tribes, but as one man or one woman has need. Men say that beyond it, in another amphitheatre of the hills, is White Valley, the Place of Peace, where the Sleepers are, and the Scarlet Hunter is sentinel. Yet who knows,—since any that have been there are constrained to be silent, or forget what they have seen?

But this Valley where the Tent stands is for those who have broken the commandment, "Thou shalt not sell thy soul." Hither they come and wait and desire continually, and this delightful land is their punishment, for they have no relish for goodly things, the power to enjoy going from them when they bargained their souls away. The great peace, the noble pasturage, the equal joy of day and night, wherein is neither heat nor cold, where life is like the haze on a harvest-field, are for chastisement, till, that by great patience and striving, someone, having the gift of sacrifice,

shall give his life to buy back that soul. For it is in the minds of this people of the North that for every life that comes into the world, one passes out, and for every soul which is bartered away, another must be set free, ere it can be redeemed.

Men and women whom life and their own sins had battered, came seeking the Tent, but they were few, and they were chiefly old, for conscience cometh mostly when man can work and wanton no more. Yet one day, when the sight of the Valley was most fair to the eyes, there came out of the southmost corner a girl who, as soon as she set foot in the Valley, laid aside her knapsack in the hollow of a tree, also her moccasins and a little cap of fur, and came on with bare head and feet towards the Mount of the Lost Winters.

She was of good stature, ripely made, not beautiful of face, but with a look which would make any man turn twice to see; a very glory of fine hair, and a hand which spoke oftener than the lips. She had come a month's travel, scarcely halting from sunrise to sunset, and she was as worn in body as in spirit. Now as she passed up the valley, she stood still several times, and looked round in a kind of dream, as well one might who had come out of an inclement south country to this sweet nourishment. Yet she stood not still for joy and content, but for pain. Once or twice she lifted up her hands above her head as though appealing, but these pauses were only for brief moments, for she kept moving on towards the Mountain with a swift step. When she had climbed the plateau where the delicate grass vielded with a tender spring to the feet, she paused long and gazed round, as though to take a last glance at all, then, turning to the Tent, looked steadfastly at it, awe and wonder, and something more difficult of interpretation, in her face. last she slowly came to the curtain of the Tent, and lifting it

without a pause, stepped inside, the curtain falling behind her.

The Tent was empty save for the centre-pole, a wooden trough of dried fruit, a jar of water, and a mat of the most delectable purple colour, which was laid between the centre-pole and the tent-curtain. The mat was of exquisite make, as it seemed from the chosen fibres of some perfect wood, and the hue was as that of a Tyrian dye. A soft light pervaded the place, perhaps filtered through the parchment-like white skin of the Tent, for it seemed to have no other fountain. Upon the farther side a token was drawn in purple on the tent skin, and the girl seeing it, turned quickly to the curtain through which she had passed. Upon the curtain were other signs. She read them slowly, and repeated them out loud in a low uncertain voice, like a bird's note blundering in a flute:

"Four bours shalt thou look Northward, kneeling on the Mat of Purple, and thinking of the Camp of the Delightful Fires, round which is the Joyous City; four hours shalt thou lie prone, thy face upon the soothing earth, desiring sleep; and four hours shalt thou look within thine own breast, thinking of thy sin; four hours also shalt thou go through the Valley, calling out that thou art lost, and praying the Scarlet Hunter to bring thee home. Afterwards thou shalt sleep, and thou shalt comfort thyself with food when thou wilt. If the Scarlet Hunter come not, and thy life faileth for misery, and none comprehending thy state offereth his life, that thy soul may be

own body, shall purchase back thy soul, but this is not possible until thou hast dwelt here a year and a day."

Having read, the girl threw herself face forward on the ground, her body shaking with grief, and she cried out a

free once more, -then thou shalt gladly die, and yielding thine

man's name many times with great bitterness.

[&]quot;Ambroise! Ambroise! Ambroise!"

A long time she lay prone, crying so, but at last arose, and folding back the curtain with hot hands, began her vigil for the redemption of a soul.

And while her sorrow grew, a father mourned for his daughter, and called his God to witness that he was guiltless of her loss, though he had said hard words to her, by reason of a man called Ambroise. Then, too, the preacher had exhorted her late and early, till her mind was in a maze—it is enough to have the pangs of youth and love, to be awakened by the pain of mere growth and knowledge, without the counsel of the overwise to go jolting through the soul.

The girl was only eighteen. She had never known her mother, she had lived as the flowers do, and when her hour of trial came, she felt herself cast like a wandering bird out of the nest. In her childhood she had known no preachers, no teaching, save the wholesome catechism of a father's love and the sacred intimacy of Nature. Living so, learning by signs the language of law and wisdom, she had indrawn the significance of legend, the power of the awful natural. She had made her own commandments.

When Ambroise, the courier, came, she looked into his eyes and saw her own—indeed it was most wonderful, for those two pairs of eyes were as of one person. And each as each looked, smiled—that smile which is the coming laughter of a heart at itself. Yet, they were different, he a man, she a woman; he versed in evil, she taught in good; he a vagrant of the snows, the fruit of whose life was like the contemptible stones of the desert, she the keeper of a goodly lodge, past which flowed a water that went softly, making rich the land—the fountain of her perfect deeds. He, looking into her eyes, saw himself when he had no sin on his soul, and she into his—as it seemed, her own always—saw herself as it were in a cobweb of evils, which she could not

understand. As his heart grew lighter, hers grew sick, even when she knew that these were the only eyes in which she

could ever see happiness.

It grew upon her that Ambroise's sins were hers, and not his; that she, not he, had bartered a soul for the wages of sin. When they said at the Fort that her eyes and Ambroise's, and her face and his were as of one piece, the pain of the thought deepened, and other pains came likewise, for her father and the preacher urged that a man who had sold himself to the devil was no comrade for her in little or much. Yet she loved him as only they can who love for the first time, and with the deep primitive emotions, which are out of the core of nature. But her heart had been cloven as by a wedge, and she would not and could not lie in his arms, nor rest her cheek to his, nor seek that haven where true love is fastened like a nail on the wall of that Inn called Home. He was herself, he must be bought back; and so, one night, while yet the winter was on, she stole away out of the Fort, pausing at his door a moment only, laying her hand upon it, as one might tenderly lay it on the brow of a sick sleeper. Then she stepped away out on the plains, pointing her course by the moon, for the Mount of Lost Winters and the Tent of the Purple Mat.

When the people of the Fort waked, and it was found that she was gone, search parties sallied out, but returned as they went after many days. And at last, because Ambroise suffered as one ground between rolling stones, even the preacher and the father of the girl relented towards him. After some weeks there came word through a wandering tribe that the body of a girl had been found on the Child o' Sin River, and black pelts were hung as mourning on the lodges and houses and walls at the Fort, and the father shut himself in his room, admitting no one. Still they mourned without great cause.

But if the girl had taken the sins of Ambroise with her, she had left him beside that soft flowing river of her goodness, and the savour of the herbs on its banks was to him like the sun on a patch of pennyroyal, bringing medicine to the sick body through the nostrils. So, one morning, after months, having crept from the covert of remores, he took a guide to start him on the right trail, and began his journey to the Valley whither she had gone before him, though he knew it not. From the moment that his guide left him, dangers beset him, and those spirits called the Mockers, which are the evil deeds of a man, crying to heaven, came crying about him from the dead white trees, breathing through the powdery air, whistling down the moonlight; so that to cheer him he called out again and again like any heathen:

"Keeper, O Keeper of the Kimash Hills!

I am as a dog in the North Sea,
I am as a bat in a cave,
As a lizard am I on a prison wall,
As a tent with no pole,
As a bird with one wing;
I am as a seal in the desert,
I am as a wild horse alone.
O Scarlet Hunter of the Kimash Hills!
Thou hast an arm like a shooting star,
Thou hast an eye like the North Sky fires,

Thou hast a pouch for the hungry, Thou hast a tent for the lost,

Hear me, O Keeper of the Kimash Hills!"

And whether or not this availed him, who can tell? There be many names of the One Thing, and the human soul hath the same North and South, if there be any North and South and East and West, save in the words of men. But something availed; and one day a foot-worn traveller entering the

Valley at the Southmost corner, laid his cap and bag, moccasins, bow and arrow, and an iron weapon, away in a hollow log, seeing not that there were also another bag and cap and a pair of moccasins there. Then, barefooted and bareheaded, he marched slowly up the Valley, and all its loveliness smote him as a red iron is buffetted at the forge; and an exquisite agony coursed through his veins, so that he cried out, hiding his face. And yet he needs must look and look, all his sight aching with this perfection, never overpowering him, but keeping him ever in the relish of his torture.

At last he came to the door of the Tent in the late evening, and intent now only to buy back the soul he had marketed,—for the sake of the memory of the woman, and believing that none would die for him, and that he must die for himself, he lifted the curtain and entered. Then he gave a great cry, for there she lay asleep, face downward, her forehead on the Purple Mat.

"Sherah! Sherah!" he cried, dropping on his knees beside her, and lifting up her head.

"Ambroise!" she called out faintly, her pale face drawing away from his breast.

"Sherah, why hast thou come here?" he said. "Thou! Thou!"

"To buy back my soul, Ambroise. And this is the last day of the year that I have spent here.—Oh, why, why didst thou come? To-morrow all should have been well!"

"To buy back thy soul-thou didst no wrong!"

But at that minute their eyes drew close, and changed, and he understood.

"For me! For me!" he whispered.

"Nay, for me!" she replied.

Then they noticed that the Purple Mat on which they knelt was red under their knees, and a goodly light shone through the Tent, not of the day or night. And as they looked amazed, the curtain of the Tent drew open, and One entered, clothed in red from head to foot; and they knew him to be the Scarlet Hunter, the lover of the lost, the Keeper of the Kimash Hills.

Looking at them steadfastly, he said to Sherah, "Thou hast prevailed. To-night at the setting of the sun an old man died in Syria, who uttered thy name as in a dream when he passed. The soul of Ambroise hath been bought back by thee."

Then he spoke to Ambroise. "Because thy spirit was willing, and for the woman's sake, thou shalt have peace; but this year which she hath spent for thee shall be taken from thy life, and added to hers. Come, and I will start ye on the swift trail to your own Country, and ye shall come here no more."

As they rose, obeying him, they saw that the red of the Mat had gone a perfect white, and they knew not what to think, for they had acted after the manner of the heathen; but, that night, as they travelled with joy towards that Inn called Home, down at the Fort, a preacher, with rude noise cried to those who would hear him, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall become whiter than snow."

GILBERT PARKER.



NOTES

I have no quarrel with the irreverence of youth nor with its desire to tilt with the veteran fighters and topple over the old gods. For I believe in general it is the result of a brave, even if sometimes mistaken devotion to an ideal of quality and beauty. On occasions, I can excuse also smartness and vulgarity, if the intention be fair. But when the curse of the journalistic call for "copy" brings indiscriminate damnation, and makes smartness and vulgarity an aim and end, it is time to call a halt. The tone of trivial scoffing with which Mr. W. D. Howells is now named does not speak much for the instincts of the younger writers. His sins are apparently that he has devoted himself exclusively to literature, that he has been a careful, conscientious workman, that he has been a courteous, dignified gentleman, and that, in European and American eyes, he has been a distinguished figure. It has counted as nothing that, in his attitude towards the younger men, he has been ready, appreciative, and generous, and that from year to year his work has shown less of devotion to theories and more of a deep, sweet, human sympathy. He has not altered with the veer of public opinion; he has not been symbolistic, nor decadent, nor fin de siècle. Criticism of him is, perhaps, inevitable since so many of us do not enjoy his whole work; but it should not be trivial. Mr. Howells is not disposed of when he is flippantly bracketed with Mr. Edward Bok in the inexpensive sarcasm of men prematurely young, and it were well for them to remember that he has done more for the dignity of American letters than any other living writer.

¶In my youthful days, it was always a source of wonderment to me that Shakespeare was not accused of that delight of the critic, plagiarism. There was indeed no doubt that he had stolen story after story, and yet no one seemed to hold it to his hurt. The mystery was finally explained to me, and I was given to understand that if a man stole well he was justified in the theft. Plagiarism is no longer a sin if the thief improves on the original. Wherefore Shakespeare was guiltless. Others are not. Mr. Max Pemberton made a mistake in his last book—a grievous mistake, and one which a young writer especially should have avoided. He had the bad taste to borrow his story, and as one of the features of the romantic movements is the emphasis of story over style, and as Mr. Pemberton could hardly be accused—even by the most unthinking—of having a style, it will be seen that he borrowed nearly all that he has.

In one case, it was Gil de Berault sent by the Cardinal to arrest the Lord of the *Château de Cocheforêt*; in the other, it is Monsieur de Guyon, sent by the king to bring Mlle. Gabrielle de Vernet, of the *Château aux Loups*, to the palace.

In both cases the young gentlemen fail, in both cases they fall in love with ladies whom they were delegated to injure, and in both cases they are eventually saved by the pleadings of these same ladies. It is perfectly evident that if Mr. Stanley Weyman had not written *Under the Red Robe*, The Little Huguenot would never have appeared. And Mr. Pemberton has no improvements which excuse his borrowing.

¶Mr. Otis Skinner has recently appeared in a play entitled Villon, the Vagabond, to the fine edification of the multitude and to the especial delight of a few whose esoteric learning was perhaps greater than their general information. In satisfying both of these demands, Mr. Skinner and his play and his company did no small thing. In fact, Mr. Skinner proved himself easily our first romantic actor: his performance showed first of all intellectuality (an uncommon quality on our stage), he was appreciative of the character he had to play, and while his Villon was by no means a picture of the

real Villon, it was as near it as dramatic limitations and nineteenth-century sensitiveness would permit. Mr. Skinner played the part with a rollicking, devil-may-care manner, touched here and there with feeling and pathos and even delicacy,—so that he was thoroughly satisfactory. One looks and longs for more such work, and in spite of the "Globe Trotters" and "Silver Linings," the "Masqueraders" and "Country Sports" one is for the moment hopeful.

¶To the sapping of all intelligence in the reader Dr. A. Conan Doyle has written The Stark-Munro Letters. Though name and form suggest a novel, it is not a story, because it is too much a tract on liberal theology; it is not a tract on liberal theology, because it is too much the thoughts of an University Extension pupil possessing a bare smattering of scientific jargon; it is not this latter, because it is a welter of everything else, and in short it is ingeniously abortive in almost every possible direction, and withal inhumanely dull.

It purports to record in letters the career of Stark Munro, a young physician in the English country. This person has never passed the stage of childish wonder at his own reasoning powers, and is sodden in thought neither quickening nor new. Puppet-wise he mouths forth the author's stray ideas; and the breath of life is not in him.

From time to time another puppet appears and even threatens to become alive. This is Cullingworth, a bristly impossible figure of a doctor with many of the trappings of picturesque grotesqueness. With his appearance a story feebly tries to lift its head. There are futile notes of mystery, inconsequential and slovenly, ragged ends in the patch-work of the volume. The author fears Cullingworth, however, and hustles him away so soon as he threatens to become entertaining.

The Stark Munro, meanwhile, scribbles through some hundreds of pages to the goal of a pale and anæmic love affair and a marriage. Then as a sop to the reader, and partly because the book is already 385 pages long, Dr. Doyle brutally puts the twain in a second-class compartment and smashes them in a railway accident; this by far the most robust and satisfying incident in the volume.

¶Long ago it was predicted that the west would "make culture hum" when it had once attended to the details of its material establishment. The prediction has been verified, and there is a vivacity of intellectual life to be surpassed nowhere. There have been, however, curious and dangerous developements.

After the period when nothing was written west of the Alleghanies came a time which, for simplicity's sake, may be personified by Bret Harte, when the Pacific coast had a living literature, to the greater glory of which the Mississippi Valley remained dumb. The literature was above all local, picturesque; and we valued it as such, challenging competition with the work of any of the story tellers.

Then with the stirrings of the Mississippi Valley—those "blind movements of a young giant" of which we have heard so much—came a new and strange doctrine of local

color, "To be indigenous is to be artistic."

The West had assumed that material and spiritual growth formed a species of monster possessing two heads and but one stomach. It continued to nourish the material head only, in the calm faith that meanwhile the spiritual was waxing strong and hearty, and the belief that as railroads descended on the stock-yards, so would the divine afflatus descend on the poets of the land. And it is not to be denied that in all this tumult and chaos of self-sufficiency men and women here and there wrote with sincere aims and artist's skill.

Had they, and they alone, been appreciated all would have gone well. But alas, the moment was arrived to "make culture hum," and these unfortunate artists, along with a NOTES 403

crowd of worthless nonentities, were enshrined as new gods in a new temple. Local celebrities are now exhibited at fortnightly bench-shows held under the fostering auspices of Woman's Clubs. There hymns of praise are chanted to the happy native city, a piping chorus of chicks in honor of their mother-incubator. "Behold" cries the now frenzied young giant," "these are my children! And what can you show to compare? To produce literature may be something; to produce Louisville, Des Moines, or Chicago literature is infinitely more."

Maliciously speaking, in view of the difficulty of the achievement, this may be perfectly true. The value of the result is another thing. Of course literature is literature whether produced in the crush of London or the loneliness of the Illinois prairie. But there are things which would not be literature, had they been produced within the gates

of Paradise.

The west is not satisfied with much real appreciation. It is as nothing that Mr. Henry Fuller's delicate artistry, Miss Alice French's broad sympathies, and Mr. Hamlin Garland's dramatic vigor are everywhere acknowledged; unless each godlet of the myriad local Mounts of Olympus has abundant worshippers at his shrine.

If the critic dares to question the merit of this occidental work, he is confounded by the shibboleths of realism and scientific criticism. "This is local, it was written on the

spot, it represents the West, of course it is good."

It is very like the old joke about things being "hand painted in oils;" The best paintings are indisputably done by hand, but so are some of the worst. The best literature is, I suppose, always the product of its environment, and so inevitable. But much of the worst is extremely local, and rural sketches are not always best when done by the hand that guides the plough.



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